

Hagerstown Receives International Honor for Safety Program

Department of Health & Mental Hygiene News Release

Baltimore, MD (September 23)—Safe Communities Canada, a certifying arm of the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion, has named Hagerstown a Safe Community for the city's outstanding efforts in developing and offering safety programs to its residents, according to the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH). The city is one of only 11 communities in the U.S., and the first in Maryland to achieve this recognition for a strong teamwork approach in applying evidence-based injury prevention strategies.

The Core Injury Prevention Program at DHMH assisted Hagerstown's Safe Communities Coalition in completing the application process.

"We are proud of Hagerstown's outstanding achievement in injury prevention outreach and education and prouder still of the continuous effort taken within the community to keep our families and neighbors safe," said John M. Colmers, DHMH Secretary. "Hagerstown's Safe Communities designation brings Maryland to the forefront as a leader in protecting families from injury."

Hagerstown firefighters offer a Home Safety Makeover program, where homeowners can get a home safety survey to help them find and remedy safety problems in the home, such as fire and fall hazards. They install free smoke alarms for homeowners, educate senior citizens on improving home safety and teach children about fire dangers at the Children's Village of Washington County. The smoke alarms installation efforts are supported through Smoke Alarms for Everybody (SAFE), a program administered by DHMH.

In order to be considered for a Safe Community designation, a team of evaluators visited Hagerstown in April to judge the city's public safety programs based on six criteria including organization, sustainability, evaluation, documentation, and how well the program reaches target populations.

The community will be honored tonight with a Safe Communities Designation Ceremony at the Hager Hall Grand Ballroom. The gala evening event will feature speakers from DHMH, Safe Communities Canada, the National Safety Council, Hagerstown Fire Department and City of Hagerstown.